



**Testimony of Corrado Ganci, AFSCME Local 749
Labor and Public Employees Committee
HB 5356 An Act Concerning Pandemic Pay for Essential Workers**

Greetings, Chairwoman Kushner, Chairwoman Porter, ranking members, and members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee.

My name is Corrado Ganci. I have worked for 7 years as a Juvenile Detention Officer at the Hartford Juvenile Detention Center.

I am also a union steward for AFSCME Local 749, which represents JDOs at the Hartford and Bridgeport Centers, along with many other essential employees in the Judicial Branch.

I am here to ask your support of HB 5356, An Act Concerning Pandemic Pay for Essential Workers.

When COVID-19 arrived in 2020, it hit our building like a ton of bricks. The juveniles under our charge got infected and so did many staff.

The Branch was unprepared for the pandemic. We wore make-shift cloth bandana face coverings that a fellow staff member made for us, because N-95 masks were not made available to us.

At one point, nearly half the JDOs in Hartford and Bridgeport came down with COVID, leaving us further under-staffed as we worked double shifts to cover the shortfall. All of our units were on lockdown. It was a nightmare.

We worked 60-80 hour weeks at times. We were afraid to go home to our families for fear of infecting them. There were many times I stayed away from my kids because I did not want them catching COVID.

Most of us who work as JDOs are also parents. We're trying our best to take care of our clients while trying to keep our families safe. Living and working with COVID around required incredible sacrifice and dedication on our part. Yet we never heard a word of thanks or appreciation from management.

Providing pandemic hero pay would right that wrong. It would recognize our sacrifice and dedication to the State of Connecticut. Please support HB 5356. Thank you.

